

Minutes: Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC)

May 11, 2012

Working session: 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Council Meeting: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

The Midtown Holiday Inn, Grand Island, Nebraska

Members present: Mike Adams, Rebecca Bimler (11:00), Pam Dobrovolny, Eric Dunning, Melinda Graham, Jane Happe, Melody Hobson, Dr. Sian Jones-Jobst (11:00), Eleanor Kirkland, Diane Lewis, Dawn Mollenkopf, Christina Pelton, Shirley Pickens-White, Deborah Ross, Susan Strahm, Carolyn Thiele, Salene Ulrich, Cristen Witte.

Members absent: Susan F. Adams, Annie Bruns, Heather Gill, Cheryl Hammond, J.P. Holys, Heather Krieger, Amy LaPointe, Carol McClain, Pete Pirsch, Roger Reikofski, Julie Rother, DeAnna Schulze.

Also in attendance: *ECICC Staff:* Terry Rohren, facilitator; Susan Dahm, secretary; *Technical Assistants:* Head Start State-based Training and Technical Assistance–Mary Finney-Afrank; PTI-Nebraska–Connie Shockley; Munroe Meyer Institute –Mark Smith; NDHHS–Lynne Brehm; NDE–Amy Bornemeier; *Presenters:* Amy Lauby, parent; Jessica Nickman, Grand Island Public Schools; Judy Weinrich, St. Francis Medical Center.

The Family Leadership Team met in a working session beginning at 9:00 a.m. before the opening of the Council meeting.

MEETING AGENDA:

1. Opening and Announcements:

Pam Dobrovolny, vice-chair, opened the meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council at 10:00 a.m. on May 11, 2012 at the Midtown Holiday Inn, Grand Island, Nebraska. Pam noted the posting of a copy of the Open Meetings Act. Those in attendance made self introductions.

2. Action Items

a. Approval of minutes

- * Motion, Melinda Graham; seconded, Jane Happe: To approve the ECICC minutes of February 17, 2012, as submitted and provided to members in the pre-meeting packet. There was no discussion. The motion passed by roll call vote: yes–16, no–0, abstain–0.

Voting yes: Mike Adams, Pam Dobrovolny, Eric Dunning, Melinda Graham, Jane Happe, Melody Hobson, Eleanor Kirkland, Diane Lewis, Dawn Mollenkopf, Christina Pelton, Shirley Pickens-White, Deborah Ross, Susan Strahm, Carolyn Thiele, Salene Ulrich, Cristen Witte.

b. Revised proposal for Council meeting agenda format

Pam Dobrovolny reviewed the revisions to the agenda format that were made following the discussion about the proposed new agenda format at the February 17, 2012 meeting. A copy of the proposed revised agenda format was provided to members in their pre-meeting packet.

- * Motion, Carolyn Thiele; seconded, Eleanor Kirkland: To approve the new agenda format as revised. There was no discussion. The motion passed by roll call vote: yes–16, no–0, abstain–0.

Voting yes: Mike Adams, Pam Dobrovolny, Eric Dunning, Melinda Graham, Jane Happe, Melody Hobson, Eleanor Kirkland, Diane Lewis, Dawn Mollenkopf, Christina Pelton, Shirley Pickens-White, Deborah Ross, Susan Strahm, Carolyn Thiele, Salene Ulrich, Cristen Witte.

c. Format for committee report out

Pam Dobrovolny informed the Council about the changes to the committee report form that would provide a standard format for reporting to the Council. Each committee could decide how to use and fill out the form, which will be the record of the committee's work.

- * Motion, Melinda Graham; seconded, Deb Ross; to approve the form as proposed. During discussion a friendly amendment was accepted to allow a committee to alter the form to relate items to the scope of the committee's work. The motion with friendly amendment passed by roll call vote: yes-16, no-0, abstain-0.

Voting yes: Mike Adams, Pam Dobrovolny, Eric Dunning, Melinda Graham, Jane Happe, Melody Hobson, Eleanor Kirkland, Diane Lewis, Dawn Mollenkopf, Christina Pelton, Shirley Pickens-White, Deborah Ross, Susan Strahm, Carolyn Thiele, Salene Ulrich, Cristen Witte.

d. Family Leadership Team (FLT) report out

Mike Adams reported on items discussed in the Family Leadership Team, which met immediately before the Council meeting. Mike announced that he had been elected chair of the FLT. The Team will probably elect a co-chair at a future date. The FLT will also begin working on their goals for the next meeting year. Mike stressed that the members of the FLT hope to be represented on each of the four Council committees that have been created. Other discussion included information about the OSEP conference in July, which Melinda Graham and Christy Pelton will attend. Also, Mark Smith has grant money for trainings in Early Intervention throughout the state that may include working with the Family Leadership Team. Finally, a concern to the Team is that Mark Smith and Connie Shockley be able to continue to support the FLT both in their meetings and by listening in to the Steering Committee conference calls so that they can inform and provide background to FLT members about issues coming before the Council.

e. Early Childhood Systems Team (ECST) report out

Eleanor Kirkland, co-chair of the ECST with Becky Veak, reported on the April 10, 2012 meeting of the ECST. The group has been working in collaboration with Together for Kids and Families (T4KF) grant, which recently learned it will be funded for another year. The grant extension will allow some funding to continue the strategic work, but so far no guidance has been issued. In light of potential reduction or elimination of T4KF, the ECST is trying to determine the kind of organization and structure might be needed to support and continue the strategic work. The ECST will have a retreat on July 11, 2012 to explore structure options, how to infuse membership into the new Council committees, funding that would be needed to sustain work groups, and a formalized strategy to communicate and connect with all stakeholders and partners. Eleanor noted the increased attention being directed toward systems work from the federal level, including encouragement to Head Start to focus on systems.

3. Local providers panel and family story

Several individuals representing providers of early childhood services in the Grand Island area participated in a panel discussion. The presenters were Pam Dobrovolny, Grand Island Public Schools; Deb Ross, Head Start Child and Family Development Program, Hastings/Grand Island; Judy Weinrich, St. Francis Medical Center in Grand Island; and Jessica Nickman, Grand Island Public Schools. The panelists responded to a series of questions that were provided to them before the meeting:

- Greatest accomplishments in the past year included being a comprehensive provider in small communities, which for some is the only preschool option; opportunities to work one-on-one with children and their parents; using the RBI (Routines Based Interview) tool to get better information from parents that translates into providing better services; and the accomplishments of the teachers who take on the challenge to make sure that each child is successful.
- Greatest challenges included adhering to the 45-day timeline from referral for early intervention, especially in verified cases of abuse or neglect (CAPTA); working with a varied and large group of partners; family mobility issues (i.e., leaving and entering programs) that taxes the provider system; issues related to transportation of preschool children; difficulties in meeting regulations between different systems, e.g., differences in Head Start and state regulations; and being

restricted in providing early intervention services only until age three. It was suggested that programs could better serve children with special needs if they were allowed to provide services until age 5, this would also allow a more seamless transition to school-based services.

- Gaps and barriers discussed by the panelists included: problems with the ACCESS-Nebraska information system that makes the process time consuming and inconsistent for the users, and which does not provide solutions for language barriers; problems staying connected with families to ensure that the child is safe and cared for outside of the school building and continuing services during the summer; language barriers within the community; lack of public transportation to access needed services; and lack of collaboration between preschool and school programs to ensure successful transition to kindergarten.
- Efforts on the local level to resolve gaps and barriers included dedication to quality services that integrate with language diversity and special needs; finding ways to work together better; finding ways for the school district to look at comprehensive services for families of preschool children; and trying to communicate and work with other agencies by attending meetings and keeping up with changes in policies on the local level.
- Questions and answers between panelists and Council members pointed up the importance of case worker/services coordination to help families make needed decisions; differences between rural and urban access to services—e.g., crisis and special services outside of the community result in family separations for long periods; access to mental health providers for young children; and difficulties in finding qualified teaching and special services staff for young children.

Amy Lauby and her son, Wesley, provided their family story, which began with Wesley's premature birth at 25 weeks due to placental abruption. Wesley was stabilized at Children's Hospital in Omaha, but an MRI showed extensive brain damage. Several precarious health issues, seizures, and breathing difficulties pointed to a dire prognosis with no way to tell what the ultimate outcomes would be. After several weeks, Wesley was stabilized enough to go home with medical supplies. The family quickly got involved with Early Intervention, especially physical and occupational therapies. They also qualified for SSI. The services of a pediatric nurse during the day allowed Amy to return to night shift work, although she soon was forced to change employment to better accommodate Wesley's needs. The family continues to deal with Wesley's on-going medical crises and interventions, which include eye surgeries, use of a C-Pap machine during sleep, eating issues, hearing problems, and repeated trips to specialists in Omaha. Wesley's needs give his parents limited work options and limited options for day care that would allow Wesley to be with other children. In spite of Wesley's limitations, his parents recognize the great strides that he has made in two years: he is a smiling, beautiful child who likes to be held, has a strong personality, and loves big movement and chocolate pudding. His parents have a realistic hope to help him reach his full potential and they are determined to "never say never." As a result of her experiences with Wesley, Amy has started a FaceBook exchange group for special equipment, foods, etc. The family continues to look for options for child care.

4. Discussion of proposed revisions to By-Laws and Operating Procedures

Council members received a copy of proposed revisions to the ECICC By-Laws and the ECICC Operating Procedures in the mailed pre-meeting packet. Council members discussed the proposed revisions during the working lunch period. Terry Rohren reminded the group that only discussion of revisions was on the agenda and that voting to approve would not be done at this meeting.

- Melody Hobson explained the background and development of the proposed revisions to the By-Laws, and Pam Dobrovolsky led the group through the sections of the revised By-Laws to highlight and explain the rationale for proposed changes. Points discussed included composition and responsibilities of committees and typographical errors.

- Christy Pelton explained some of the proposed changes to the Operating Procedures and asked for suggestions for additional revisions and/or changes. Points discussed included the consent agenda and alternate staffing of the Council.
- * The revisions committee will consider the points discussed and make changes and corrections as noted. A final copy of proposed revisions will be supplied to the membership before the next Council meeting (August 24, 2012).

5. Public Comment:

- a. Christy Pelton described how the ECST has discussed developing strategies, which she thought about in terms of how the Council could “advise and assist” in this process. She encouraged the Council to have a vision and commitment to doing the job, and to make the process such that it would engage our constituencies.
- b. Amy Bornemeier distributed a draft copy of “Ready for Success,” a booklet targeting families and home providers with information about getting ready for kindergarten. The booklet is a revision of the “Come As You Are” booklet that Amy has revised as part of the school readiness project supported by the SAC grant. The revised booklet will be ready for the Kindergarten Conference in July.

6. Process for identifying committee choices

A committee selection form was designed by Terry Rohren and distributed to Council members and technical assistants in the pre-meeting packets. Individuals were asked to rank their preferences in first to last (1 to 4) order and return the form to Terry Rohren. The Steering Committee will use the preference rankings to form the four new committees that were approved at the February 2012 meeting. Members and TAs will be informed of their committee assignments before the August meeting.

7. Update on IDEA-Part C Regulations

Pam Dobrovolsky provided an update on the IDEA-Part C regulations for Carol McClain who was unable to attend the meeting. The IDEA-Part C Regulations were released in September 2011 and became effective 30 days later on October 28, 2011. The regulations must be implemented by July 1, 2012. As part of the implementation, an internal committee from the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) is writing a draft of Rule 52, which will be a new rule focused on Part C. Another internal committee of Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS) is working on revisions to the Services Coordination Manual. These drafts will be presented to Early Development Network conference participants on June 13, 2012. A stakeholders meeting on the regulations is scheduled for June 27, 2012.

8. Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) Needs Assessment

Eleanor Kirkland provided meeting participants with a copy of the survey template used to conduct a needs assessment of relevant Head Start agencies in the state, as required by the Head Start Act of 2007. Eleanor explained that revisions were made to the initial survey template to make it more generic to allow it to be used more widely by states and local communities to conduct needs assessments. Eleanor noted that the survey template might be useful in ECICC committee work or by others involved in local and regional planning.

9. Agenda items for the August 24, 2012 meeting

Recommendations for agenda items for the August 24, 2012 meeting included:

- ECICC By-Laws proposed revisions
- ECICC Operating Procedures proposed revisions
- Discussion of needs assessment
- Home visitation technical assistance (Eleanor Kirkland)

- Update on IDEA-Part C Regulations
- Overview of parent education programs being conducted in the state
- Update and/or report on Together for Kids and Families (Lynne Brehm)
- Presentation about ACCESS-Nebraska and related problems—contact Karen Heng, NDHHS

10. Adjourn

- * Motion, Carolyn Thiele; seconded Shirley Pickens-White: to adjourn.
With no other items to be discussed, the Council adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Next meeting: August 24, 2012, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.; Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEETING HANDOUTS:

- ✓ ECICC Updates, May 11, 2012
- ✓ Booklet: “Ready for Success”
- ✓ Survey template: Head Start and Early Head Start State Collaboration Needs Assessment